

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend claims 6-21 as follows:

Claims 1-5 (canceled).

6. (currently amended) Apparatus for producing tobacco products with handling elements and subassemblies for handling the tobacco products, characterized by the following features the apparatus comprising:

a plurality of receiving elements,

at least one tobacco separator (45), and

a chute,

[[a]] ~~arranged in the region of the elements and subassemblies for handling the tobacco products are collecting elements, conveying elements and/or suction-extraction elements~~

wherein the plurality of receiving elements include a first conveying element, a first suction-extraction element including suction lines, and at least one additional receiving element selected from the group consisting of: a second conveying element, a second suction-extraction element, and a collecting element, the plurality of receiving elements being arranged and positioned substantially adjacent to the handling elements and subassemblies for the purpose of receiving tobacco particles (19) caused to accumulate on account of the handling of the tobacco products by the handling elements and subassemblies,

[[b]] wherein at least one of the first and second conveying elements and the suction lines conveys the tobacco particles (19) can be conveyed away by the conveying elements and/or by suction lines away from the handling elements and subassemblies,

[[c)]] wherein at least one of the first and second conveying elements and the suction lines feeds the tobacco particles (19) can be fed by the conveying elements and/or suction lines to the at least one tobacco separator (45), which separates off, and collects, the tobacco particles (19), and

[[d)]] wherein the chute permits the removal of the tobacco particles (19) can be removed from the tobacco separator (45); and

wherein [[,]] at least one of the first suction-extraction element and the second suction-extraction element includes a suction-based suction-extraction element (32) arranged and positioned substantially adjacent to a magazine (13) in a packaging machine (10) for the tobacco products, in the region of a magazine (13) for forming groups (15) of the tobacco products, is at least one with the suction-based suction-extraction element (32) for the purpose of extracting operating to extract the tobacco particles (19) by suction.

7. (currently amended) Apparatus according to Claim 6, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the suction-based suction-extraction element (32) is arranged and positioned in a rear region predetermined rear location of the magazine (13) for holding the tobacco products disposed directly above a movement plane of push rods (26) for pushing the groups (15) of tobacco products out of the magazine (13).

8. (currently amended) Apparatus according to Claim 7, ~~characterized in that wherein:~~

each of the tobacco products includes a filter at an end thereof; and

the suction-based suction-extraction element (32) has a suction member (33) which is directed towards the filter ends of the tobacco products, and the suction member (33) extends transversely over the entire width of the magazine (13) and has suction chambers (34) for receiving suction air with tobacco particles (19), the suction chambers (34) being open at least partially on the side directed towards the tobacco products in the magazine (13).

9. (currently amended) Apparatus according to Claim 8, ~~characterized in that wherein~~ two suction-extraction lines (36, 37) arranged at mutually opposite ends are connected to at least one of the suction member (33) and ~~[[/or]]~~ to the suction chambers (34) for the purpose of extracting air with tobacco particles (19) by suction.

10. (currently amended) Apparatus for producing tobacco products with handling elements and subassemblies for handling the tobacco products, ~~characterized by the following features~~ the apparatus comprising:

a plurality of receiving elements,

at least one tobacco separator (45),

a chute,

a pocket chain (17) with pockets (16) for receiving in each pocket a group (15) of

the tobacco products, and

a pusher for pushing the tobacco products into the pockets (16),

[[a))] ~~arranged in the region of the elements and subassemblies for handling the tobacco products are collecting elements, conveying elements and/or suction-extraction elements~~

wherein the plurality of receiving elements include a first conveying element, a first suction-extraction element including suction lines, and at least one additional receiving element selected from the group consisting of: a second conveying element, a second suction-extraction element, and a collecting element, the plurality of receiving elements being arranged and positioned substantially adjacent to the handling elements and subassemblies for the purpose of receiving tobacco particles (19) caused to accumulate on account of the handling of the tobacco products by the handling elements and subassemblies,

[[b))] wherein at least one of the first and second conveying elements and the suction lines conveys the tobacco particles (19) can be conveyed away by the conveying elements and/or by suction lines away from the handling elements and subassemblies,

[[c))] wherein at least one of the first and second conveying elements and the suction lines feeds the tobacco particles (19) can be fed by the conveying elements and/or suction lines to the at least one tobacco separator (45), which separates off, and collects, the tobacco particles (19), and

[[d))] wherein the chute permits the removal of the tobacco particles (19) can be removed from the tobacco separator (45); and

a pocket chain (17) with pockets (16) for receiving in each pocket a group (15) of the tobacco products,

wherein at least one suction-extraction subassembly (23) is positioned in the region substantially adjacent to the pusher where the groups (15) of tobacco products are pushed into the pockets (16) of the pocket chain (17).

11. (currently amended) Apparatus according to Claim 10, ~~characterized in that wherein~~ the at least one suction-extraction subassembly (23) has a suction-extraction housing (24) which partially encloses the pocket chain (17) ~~in the region of~~ at a top side and a longitudinal side of the pocket chain (17) with a suction-extraction line (25) adjoining the suction-extraction housing (24).

12. (currently amended) Apparatus for producing tobacco products with handling elements and subassemblies for handling the tobacco products, ~~characterized by the following features~~ the apparatus comprising:

a plurality of receiving elements,
at least one tobacco separator (45),
a chute, and
a suction-extraction subassembly,

~~[[a)] arranged in the region of the elements and subassemblies for handling the tobacco products are collecting elements, conveying elements and/or suction-extraction elements~~
wherein the plurality of receiving elements include a first conveying element, a first suction-extraction element including suction lines, and at least one additional receiving element selected from the group consisting of: a second conveying element, a second suction-extraction element, and a collecting element, the plurality of receiving elements being arranged and positioned substantially adjacent to the handling elements and subassemblies for the purpose of receiving tobacco particles (19) caused to accumulate on account of the handling of the tobacco products by the handling elements and subassemblies,

[[b)]] wherein at least one of the first and second conveying elements includes conveying belts (38, 39), and at least one of the first and second conveying elements and the suction lines conveys the tobacco particles (19) can be conveyed away by the conveying elements having conveying belts (38, 39) and/or by suction lines away from the handling elements and subassemblies,

[[c)]] wherein at least one of the first and second conveying elements and the suction lines feeds the tobacco particles (19) can be fed by the conveying elements and/or suction lines to the at least one tobacco separator (45), which separates off, and collects, the tobacco particles (19), and

[[d)]] wherein the chute permits the removal of the tobacco particles (19) can be removed from the tobacco separator (45);

wherein the conveying belts (38, 39) intercept and transport away tobacco particles (19) falling downward under their own weight are intercepted, and transported away, by the conveying belts (38, 39), allowing the tobacco particles transported by the conveying belts to be fed to a with the conveying belts (38, 39) for feeding the suction-extraction subassembly for the purpose of the tobacco particles being transported further by means of suction air.

13. (currently amended) Apparatus according to Claim 12, ~~characterized in that the conveying elements~~ further comprising:

a first collecting element having an intercepting hopper;

wherein the conveying belts (38, 39) include a first conveying belt (38) which extends in the longitudinal direction of a conveying path of the first and second conveying elements for with the first conveying belt (38) feeding tobacco particles (19) intercepted by the

first conveying belt (38) to be fed to a the first collecting element ~~having an intercepting hopper~~ (20).

14. (currently amended) Apparatus according to Claim 13, ~~characterized in that wherein the conveying belts (38, 39) include a second conveying belt (39) arranged and positioned beneath the intercepting hopper (20) for intercepting and directing the tobacco particles falling downwards under their own weight are intercepted, and directed further, in the region of increased accumulation by to be increasingly accumulated in the intercepting hopper (20), and with a second collecting belt (39) for tobacco particles (19) begin arranged beneath the intercepting hopper (20).~~

15. (currently amended) Apparatus for producing tobacco products with handling elements and subassemblies for handling the tobacco products, ~~characterized by the following features the apparatus comprising:~~

a plurality of receiving elements,

at least one tobacco separator (45),

a chute,

a collecting belt (39) having a deflecting roller, and

a suction-extraction subassembly having a suction tube (40),

[[a]] ~~arranged in the region of the elements and subassemblies for handling the tobacco products are collecting elements, conveying elements and/or suction-extraction elements~~

wherein the plurality of receiving elements include a first conveying element, a first suction-extraction element including suction lines, and at least one additional receiving

element selected from the group consisting of: a second conveying element, a second suction-extraction element, and a collecting element, the plurality of receiving elements being arranged and positioned substantially adjacent to the handling elements and subassemblies for the purpose of receiving tobacco particles (19) caused to accumulate on account of the handling of the tobacco products by the handling elements and subassemblies,

[[b)]] wherein at least one of the first and second conveying elements and the suction lines conveys the tobacco particles (19) can be conveyed away by the conveying elements and/or by suction lines away from the handling elements and subassemblies,

[[c)]] wherein at least one of the first and second conveying elements and the suction lines feeds the tobacco particles (19) can be fed by the conveying elements and/or suction lines to the at least one tobacco separator (45), which separates off, and collects, the tobacco particles (19), and

[[d)]] wherein the chute permits the removal of the tobacco particles (19) can be removed from the tobacco separator (45); and

wherein the collecting belt (39) transports and feeds the tobacco particles (19) are transported by a collecting belt (39), to be fed to a to the suction-extraction subassembly having
 [[a]] the suction tube (40) which is arranged in the region of a with the suction-extraction subassembly arranged and positioned substantially adjacent to the deflecting roller (41) of the collecting belt (39) and partially encloses enclosed by the deflecting roller (41) such that the collecting belt (39) conveys the tobacco particles can be conveyed into a suction tube (40) by the collecting belt (39).

16. (currently amended) Apparatus according to Claim 6, ~~characterized in that~~ further comprising:

a main tube (43) having a connecting member therein,

wherein the tobacco separator (45) is connected to the connecting member (44) in the main tube (43), for receiving the tobacco particles (19) received in the region of ~~from a~~ packaging machine and/or of a maker can be fed to the tobacco separator (45), with ~~by~~ individual suction-extraction lines thereof which run within the packaging machine and/or within the maker opening out, via [[a]] the connecting member (44), in [[a]] the main tube (43), which leads to the tobacco separator (45).

17. (currently amended) Apparatus for producing tobacco products with handling elements and subassemblies for handling the tobacco products, ~~characterized by the following features~~ the apparatus comprising:

a plurality of receiving elements,

at least one tobacco separator (45), and

a chute,

~~[[a]] arranged in the region of the elements and subassemblies for handling the tobacco products are collecting elements, conveying elements and/or suction-extraction elements~~

wherein the plurality of receiving elements include a first conveying element, a first suction-extraction element including suction lines, and at least one additional receiving element selected from the group consisting of: a second conveying element, a second suction-extraction element, and a collecting element, the plurality of receiving elements being arranged and positioned substantially adjacent to the handling elements and subassemblies for the purpose

of receiving tobacco particles (19) caused to accumulate on account of the handling of the tobacco products by the handling elements and subassemblies,

[[b)]] wherein at least one of the first and second conveying elements and the suction lines conveys the tobacco particles (19) ~~can be conveyed away by the conveying elements and/or by suction lines~~ away from the handling elements and subassemblies,

[[c)]] wherein at least one of the first and second conveying elements and the suction lines feeds the tobacco particles (19) ~~can be fed by the conveying elements and/or suction lines~~ to the at least one tobacco separator (45), which separates off, and collects, the tobacco particles (19), and

[[d)]] wherein the chute permits the removal of the tobacco particles (19) ~~can be removed~~ from the tobacco separator (45); and

wherein [[,]] the tobacco separator (45) is positioned exterior to a packing machine (10), at a distance from the ~~same~~ the packing machine (10), with a main tube (43) leading out of the packaging machine (10) to the tobacco separator (45).

18. (currently amended) Apparatus for producing tobacco products with handling elements and subassemblies for handling the tobacco products, characterized by the following features the apparatus comprising:

a plurality of receiving elements, and

a chute,

at least one tobacco separator (45) having:

a housing (46),

a fan (47) disposed within the housing (46), and

a separating element,

[[a]] ~~arranged in the region of the elements and subassemblies for handling the tobacco products are collecting elements, conveying elements and/or suction-extraction elements~~

wherein the plurality of receiving elements include a first conveying element, a first suction-extraction element including suction lines, and at least one additional receiving element selected from the group consisting of: a second conveying element, a second suction-extraction element, and a collecting element, the plurality of receiving elements being arranged and positioned substantially adjacent to the handling elements and subassemblies for the purpose of receiving tobacco particles (19) caused to accumulate on account of the handling of the tobacco products by the handling elements and subassemblies,

[[b]] wherein at least one of the first and second conveying elements and the suction lines conveys the tobacco particles (19) can be conveyed away by the conveying elements and/or by suction lines away from the handling elements and subassemblies,

[[c]] wherein at least one of the first and second conveying elements and the suction lines feeds the tobacco particles (19) can be fed by the conveying elements and/or suction lines to the at least one tobacco separator (45), which separates off, and collects, the tobacco particles (19), and

[[d]] wherein the chute permits the removal of the tobacco particles (19) can be removed from the tobacco separator (45); and

wherein, within a housing (46), the tobacco separator (45) has a the fan (47) for producing produces suction air, allowing [[the]] taken-in air, which is mixed with tobacco particles (19), to be fed to [[a]] the separating element (48) for separating off the tobacco

particles (19), and for leading the air freed from the tobacco particles (19) ~~then to be led~~ outwards by the fan (47).

19. (currently amended) Apparatus according to Claim 18, ~~characterized in that, once~~ wherein the tobacco separator (45) separates off the tobacco particles (19) ~~have been separated off in the region of~~ substantially adjacent to the separating element (48), and leads the taken-in air ~~can be led~~ through cleaning elements having air filters (49).

20. (currently amended) Apparatus for producing tobacco products with handling elements and subassemblies for handling the tobacco products, ~~characterized by the following features~~ the apparatus comprising:

a plurality of receiving elements,

a chute, and

at least one tobacco separator (45) having:

a separating element (48), and

a removal assembly for collected tobacco particles (19), with the removal

assembly including:

a base; and

a flap (55) which is positioned at a distance from the base,

[[a)]] ~~arranged in the region of the elements and subassemblies for handling the tobacco products are collecting elements, conveying elements and/or suction-extraction elements~~

wherein the plurality of receiving elements include a first conveying element, a first suction-extraction element including suction lines, and at least one additional receiving

element selected from the group consisting of: a second conveying element, a second suction-extraction element, and a collecting element, the plurality of receiving elements being arranged and positioned substantially adjacent to the handling elements and subassemblies for the purpose of receiving the tobacco particles (19) caused to accumulate on account of the handling of the tobacco products by the handling elements and subassemblies,

[[b))] wherein at least one of the first and second conveying elements and the suction lines conveys the tobacco particles (19) can be conveyed away by the conveying elements and/or by suction lines away from the handling elements and subassemblies,

[[c))] wherein at least one of the first and second conveying elements and the suction lines feeds the tobacco particles (19) can be fed by the conveying elements and/or suction lines to the at least one tobacco separator (45), which separates off, and collects, the tobacco particles (19), and

[[d))] wherein the chute permits the removal of the tobacco particles (19) can be removed from the tobacco separator (45); and

wherein, in the region of the separating element (48), the tobacco separator (45) has a removal arrangement for collected tobacco particles (19), which includes:

a base; and

a flap (55) which is positioned at a distance from the base

wherein the removal assembly is arranged and positioned substantially adjacent to the separating element (48).

21. (currently amended) Apparatus according to Claim 17, ~~characterized in that wherein the tobacco separator (45) includes a housing (46) having an outlet opening (52),~~
and

wherein the main tube (43) passes into the housing (46) of the tobacco separator (45), and in that, once the air has been separated off the air emerges such that, within the housing (46), the tobacco separator (45) separates off the air from the tobacco particles (19) and directs the air to emerge from the housing (46) via [[an]] the outlet opening (52).